EDITOR’S LETTER

April sees our first fashion and accessories issue for L’Officiel Arabia. We have found the most exciting and relevant pieces for your personal review. Fendi’s iconic Baguette bag gets immortalized this month on the big screen with three short films and we are here to tell you all about the history behind the bag itself.

The fashion world descended on Dubai for the Christian Dior couture show straight from Paris. With the inventive setting of the ring top circus tent we were transported for the evening to a world of theatrical elegance with the ever expressive and inventive designs of Maria Grazia Chiuri.

Couture exists really, to most, now as a revered art form. Almost a muse to the glass that acts as inspiration and direction for ready to wear fashion choices and beauty trends. One designer, Ronald Van Der Kemp of Amsterdam, is looking to redefine that with his Demi couture approach. A ode back to the days when women built wardrobes over time with pieces of personal meaning not solely for consumption sake. We sat down with him to gain an insight into his philosophy and to why the fashion and celebrity world are wild for his designs and approach.

While in Amsterdam we spent time visiting The Ravestijn Gallery. An exceptional photographic gallery with a commitment to exploring new photography perspectives and a dedication to nurturing young talent. Exploring their exciting new exhibit and discussing the photographers they work with, including the wickedly talented Inez & Vinoodh.

As summer fast approaches holidays are on our mind. Monaco, a city steeped in glamour and history, drew our attention. We visited to see the historic gems that have undergone vast renovations and transformations and to review new plans for the exciting One Monaco hub. An exciting trip and so much to share with you all, call your travel agent!

Our cover girl this month, Kiernan Shipka, sat with us to discuss how she navigated the choppy waters of child stardom and pivoted to an adult acting career. A truly exciting interview and insight. Perhaps my favorite tip from her was the importance of finding balance between fun and professionalism.

I hope you enjoy digesting this months issue as much as we did creating it.

Boba
Having a history that paved the path for it, producing a vast group of amazing image-makers, unique artists with their personal aesthetics doing well on the international art market, such as Viviane Sassen, Erwin Olaf, Rineke Dijkstra, Inez & Vinoodh and many, many more; with its institutions and galleries, Amsterdam today represents a rich culture of photography. In this city so open towards photography, and just outside of the touristic center, within just a 10 min walk from the Central Station, there is an area called Westerdok with its old-style charming docks, harbors and re-imagined ancient warehouses. This is the place where you will find surely the best contemporary photography gallery in Amsterdam.

The Ravestijn Gallery was founded in 2012 by Jasper Bode and Narda Van ’t Veer focusing on, and championing conceptual contemporary photography. Working in the field of photography for over 25 years on two continents, Bode and van ’t Veer respectively bring together decades of experience curating photography exhibitions and representing a diverse group of photographic talents. The Gallery represents both Dutch and international artists whose work combines strong aesthetics with deeper conceptual layers that push the boundaries of the medium.

“We are specialized in photography, but also anything that has to do with it,” says Bode and continues: “We live with photography. We are representing and looking for artists who use photography as a basis, who add another layer to it; building the story; who try and play around photography as a medium. For example, at the last edition of the Art Rotterdam fair we presented a solo show comprising of framed photographs combined with life-size sculptures by the artist Mariken Wessels – entitled Arising from the Ground.” Amsterdam based Wessels was sufficiently inspired by Eadweard Muybridge’s little-known studies of the motion of an obese person that she bought from an auction and embarked on a series of photographs, films and sculptures.

As I walked in the Ravestijn gallery on that beautiful sunny day, I was suddenly surrounded by the portraits of the current exhibition “Love me” by the artist Robin de Puy. The portraits in this exhibition have nothing in common at first glance. From a model named Birg on his way to fame to Randy, an adolescent boy who grows up in Ely, Nevada. There are portraits of young people and of elderly people, of broken shopping trolleys and of worn out hands. Beautiful and ugly. But does ugly actually exist? Not in the images of Robin de Puy. She finds beauty in what others regard as unworthy.

Unexpected, moving beauty is what links the photos in the exhibition. And in every image De Puy is present. As a photographer she determines who participates in her photographic world, she is the director. And in her world everyone has a very specific, undeniable beauty.

This is exactly one of so many precious things you can find at The Ravestijn gallery; this commitment to exploring new photography perspectives and a dedication to nurturing young talent, which largely contributes to the gallery’s relevance in today’s rich contemporary photography landscape.

In addition to its exhibition program, participation in international fairs and museum exhibitions, the gallery holds an expansive collection of 20th century and contemporary photographs, and houses an impressive photography library with over 3,000 titles. Distinguishing factor from the others in the field is as well the fact that The Ravestijn gallery gives a lot of attention to their on-line presence. As Bode in one of his interviews said: “With the emergence of online platforms and specific websites, buying and collecting art has become easier for everyone. The digital revolution created a brand new clientele in the art world and made the artworks more attainable and visible worldwide.”
1. Horse and Rider. Freudenthal Verhagen
As of 2018 The Ravestijn Gallery is representing the famous photographers duo Inez & Vinoodh, known for their fearless and adventurous photography. The Dutch, New York-based, artists Inez van Lamsweerde and Vinoodh Matadin are partners and collaborators whose practice moves between genres and media, pop-culture, fashion and art.

“The duo has been exploring and pushing the boundaries of art and fashion photography for over three decades. In the early 1990’s they were at the forefront of using new developments in digital technology for photography, paired with a bold aesthetic sensibility, which resulted in a signature style that has become the world-famous Inez & Vinoodh.” Their friendship goes back to the time when they were students at the prestigious Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam. In fact from 1990 till 1997 when Inez left for New York, Jasper Bode was her agent.

“We wanted to publish a new book with triptychs. Combining 3 images, creating an almost abstract storyline. But a tryptic on a two page spread didn’t work. So we quickly came to the conclusion that it would be best to show our triptychs on the wall.” Therefore they discussed the idea with Jasper Bode and The Ravestijn Gallery, and easily agreed on collaboration.

“We have a long history together, our relationship is very close. It was clear to us that it was the time to do something together again, and now Vinoodh and I have a gallery in Amsterdam, the perfect place for an international operating base.”

Often their images are printed larger than life, enhancing their other-worldliness, such as the photographs of pop-icon Lady Gaga. The artists’ intervention of collage technique abstracts the famous star into an almost unrecognizable, ethereal muse. Inez & Vinoodh made an image of Lady Gaga with whom they have collaborated with since 2011, on both photography and videos and enjoy a close friendship.

“This is a collage of three photos of Lady Gaga and therefore a kind of triptych in itself. That image, a reconstruction of the face of someone who transforms endlessly, who plays with the status of a star and who is elevated to monstrous forms either by herself or by her audience. She always wears a mask, but through our mutual inspiration she became more honest and more pure in front of our camera - all this is in this work.”

Inez & Vinoodh have created groundbreaking editorials for such publications as American, French, Japanese and Italian Vogue, V Magazine, Visionaire, The New York Times Magazine, The Gentlewoman, and W Magazine, as well as campaigns for Balenciaga, Balmain, Calvin Klein, Chanel, Dior, Gucci, Isabel Marant, Louis Vuitton, Miu Miu, Valentino and Yohji Yamamoto. Their work has been exhibited in galleries and museums internationally including the Stedelijk Museum and Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, the Hayward Gallery in London, the Deichtor hallen in Hamburg and the Whitney Museum of Contemporary Art in New York. A retrospective show titled PRETTY MUCH EVERYTHING 1985-2010 began its international tour at FOAM, Amsterdam in the summer of 2010 and has since travelled to the Paviljon Bienal in Sao Paulo, the Dallas Contemporary in Dallas and Fotografiska in Stockholm.